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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5011  
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RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6665  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4725  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3413  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 3505  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0969  
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0302  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2587  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0094  
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 0167  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 7229  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 5001  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO 0094  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1637  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 002123

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STATE FOR SCA/INS, USPACOM FOR FPA

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TAGS: PREL PTER MARR CE IN

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR BRIEFS INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER ON  
U.S.-SRI LANKAN MILITARY DISCUSSIONS

REF: 190653Z DEC 06

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr. for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Ambassador hosted a one-on-one lunch for Indian High Commissioner Alok Prasad on December 22, hours after Prasad presented his credentials to President Rajapakse. The Ambassador told Prasad that he and his Embassy colleagues looked forward to working very closely with Prasad and his mission to share information and coordinate our messages to the Government of Sri Lanka, since the U.S. and India share virtually identical interests in Sri Lanka. Prasad fully endorsed the importance of very close coordination, noting that the U.S. and India were the most influential countries in Sri Lanka and therefore should work closely to ensure maximum impact.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador briefed Prasad on the request the Embassy had received earlier in the week from the Sri Lankan Navy Commander for USG assistance in locating and interdicting three LTTE ships believed to be 600 nautical miles south of Sri Lanka (ref). Ambassador told Prasad he had received the Navy Commander's blessing to brief Prasad on the Sri Lankan request since the USG wanted to be transparent with India, both because of our close bilateral relations, but also because the Indian Navy was active throughout the southern Indian Ocean making close coordination a must. The Ambassador noted that PACOM was now studying what the US military might do to respond to the Sri Lankan request. The Ambassador told Prasad the Sri Lankans had not approached the Indians directly because they believe that Tamil Nadu politics would likely preclude Indian action on this matter. That said, Ambassador noted that President Bush and PM Singh had agreed during the President's visit to India earlier in the year that maritime cooperation on such matters as piracy and smuggling marked a promising new area in which to expand cooperation. Cooperation to help Sri Lanka interdict LTTE arms shipments would be an equally promising area for cooperation. If India was interested in helping the U.S. and

Sri Lanka regarding the three LTTE ships, the U.S. would be open to such cooperation. Prasad thanked the Ambassador for letting him know about the Sri Lankan request, promised to report this back to Delhi, but did not venture an opinion on whether India might want to participate.

¶3. (C) Ambassador also briefed Prasad that he had asked the Sri Lankan Navy Commander to brief the Indian High Commission on USG plans to install by mid-2007 land-based radars in Trincomalee, Point Pedro (Jaffna) and Mannar to improve Sri Lanka's capability to detect and track sea-based weapons and other smuggling by the LTTE. Prasad responded that the Sri Lankan Navy had indeed briefed his Defense Attaché. In the spirit of transparency he noted that the Indian military might object to the radar at Point Pedro since it was so close to India that its purpose might be misconstrued.

Ambassador explained that the purpose of the Point Pedro site was to give Sri Lanka the capability to monitor frequent LTTE ship movements to the east, north and west of Jaffna, not in any way to monitor or spy on India. Prasad, who served as India's Deputy Chief of Mission in Washington from 2001-2004, laughed and said he understood that, but others in the Indian system might not.

¶4. (C) Comment: This was a good, friendly start to what we are confident will be a very close working relationship. With respect to India's concerns about the proposed radar site at Point Pedro, the Embassy will plan to have ODC Chief Major Miller meet with the Indian DATT in January to brief him more fully on the planned capabilities of the radar at Point Pedro to relieve possible Indian concerns and discuss options.

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